

necessary power and from my personal experience, though limited as to time, as you know, I am confident that for New York State, at least, our future is secure, if we do our part and work together quietly, rationally and steadily.

WHAT WE ARE OVERLOOKING OF FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE IN THE TRAINING OF THE MODERN NURSE.

By M. E. P. DAVIS

WHENEVER it is suggested that I attempt to formulate ideas and put them on paper, I am at once reminded of the remark of a noted actor who said: "It is so *easy not* to write a drama that I wonder so many persist in doing it." My present attitude may look like that same foolish persistence in deliberately making effort in the least easy direction. A little explanation will perhaps disabuse your minds of the fear that you are to be "victimized" listening to a tiresome paper setting forth arbitrary views. When I, with the other members, was asked to suggest a topic for discussion at this meeting, I took it literally and at once jumped to a conclusion, and made a snap diagnosis.

I had a little conversation with myself, and I said, "This is a delightful innovation. The Council means to select the most interesting subjects, send a list to each member, or better, publish the list in the JOURNAL, so that each may come prepared with her pros and cons gathered from her experience, more or less convincingly expressed, according to the degree of her positive belief in, or her disapproval of, the points under discussion, stimulating others by her personality to a fuller expression of their opinions, so that new ideas, bare facts or actual experiment may become common property."

Now here was an opportunity to get views on what has long appeared to me an all-important point, the systematic development and co-ordination of the trinity of the pupil, which we are careful to speak of, as the co-operation of head, hands and heart (the intellect, the physical and the humanities). I forthwith grasped the opportunity, posted my topic to the secretary and thought little more about it, till I was notified that the Council thought the subject interesting (or mystifying) enough to select it as a subject for discussion, and agreed that I would be the proper person to put the matter before you, the natural inference being that I knew what I was talking about. I *do* know some of the things, and wishing to know more, consented—not to write a paper but to introduce the subject, "What We Are Overlooking of Fundamental Importance in the Training of the Modern Nurse."

Our dear friendly critics tell us that we are giving the head undue attention and are overlooking the humanities, and, in suggesting improvements in the education of the nurse, make capital out of the perpetual iteration that the nurse is selfish, mercenary, unsympathetic or wants time to eat and sleep while the world is suffering and do not hesitate to say that in the *tout ensemble* of the finished product the humanities count for more, judged by lay standards than technical knowledge or manual skill. Dr. Richard C. Cabot in an address before the New England Society, "For the Education of the Nurse," voiced this universal criticism when he made a plea for what he called "Comfort Nurses, Those Who Fit In," thereby emphasizing and endorsing that criticism. Not that Dr. Cabot is altogether one of the cult who is clamoring for less technical or practical training, but for *more* co-ordinate development of the head, hands and heart, with emphasis perhaps on the heart qualities.

He enumerated among other desirable teachings loving service, sympathy, unselfishness, tact; and singled out tact as the virtue *par excellence* in the nurse's equipment, which he stated *should be* because it *could be* taught. Perhaps it can, but not separated from the whole mental development, which requires a much more strenuous educating and a firmer grasp on the underlying principle which governs motive than we have hitherto been able to secure. But at no stage of the development would I select tact—desirable as it is—as the pivotal virtue in a nurse's manifestation of her mental attitude, because it is a product or exponent of a happy mixture of head and heart qualities graciously expressed through the physical. The regrettable thing is that Dr. Cabot forgot to tell us *how* tact could be taught; of course all the critics *know how*, but they leave it in that delightfully tantalizing state of uncertainty that makes one so indignant when criticized, for the superintendents, or some other body of teachers, of training-schools to tackle and evolve on a practical basis.

In view of the prevalent attitude and our own recognition of the need, is it wise to longer ignore the demand and cling to the old idea that routine, discipline, environment, contact, precept, example, or even high intellectual attainment, is the only ground on which the mental attitude can be approached or the only way through which a change or development of the personality can be effected? It is about as wise, I should say, as for the schools to adhere to the manner of teaching which obtained twenty years ago. Granted that the ideal woman is she who takes the correct attitude toward the issues of life, and regulates her conduct by her standard of character, and that the ideal nurse is but the ideal woman *plus* her professional knowledge, how is the ordinary probationer or pupil

to be brought to recognize this underlying principle from which to work toward ideals, and develop character that will regulate conduct at all times, even when the safeguards of discipline and supervision are no longer operative? How are we to get at this? We reach the mental only through the physical; *i.e.*, we judge the mental attitude by the physical act. For example, if one takes the physical attitude of courage and maintains that attitude, the physical expresses "a bold front," as we say.

We are overlooking then the culture of this physical expression. We are overlooking the important part the instrument plays in this co-ordination and co-operation of the trinity. We must teach the pupil the right use and the possibilities for greater usefulness of the instrument with which the work is to be performed. We might at least teach her to adjust the instrument at the angle of most correct expression, which will be the angle of easiest performance of the physical act. Whether she stands, walks, sits or bends, let the body be so adjusted, the position so normal, that the least exhaustive demand be made on strength, power of endurance or the proper functioning of the body. This will produce a correspondingly easy mental attitude, less friction, less fault-finding, fewer lions in the way. Teach her how to concentrate her whole attention to the thing in hand. "This one thing I do," and it is done well. One thing at a time. Don't let the mind get separated from the body, nor from bodily work, when work is being performed.

Teach her how to relax. We all know the recuperative power of a few minutes' sleep. A few minutes' relaxation is the best substitute when sleep is not possible. Drop everything, every tension, every care, and come as near the unconsciousness of sleep as possible. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter, with all our teaching let us endeavor to teach the pupil to get wisdom, which is to "know herself."